



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Facility Services • Mental Health Licensure and Certification Section**

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Michael F. Easley, Governor

Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Stephanie M. Alexander, Chief

**Notice
Emergency Relocation of Clients**

To: All Licensed G.S. 122C 24-hour providers
From: Stephanie Alexander, Chief, Mental Health Licensure and Certification Section
Date: January 23, 2006
Re: Emergencies requiring relocation of clients

This notice is to serve as an update for new providers, and a reminder to other providers, of the guidelines providers should follow should they experience an emergency which makes the facility unavailable for use and requires relocation of clients.

For purposes of this notice, the term "emergency" refers to any situation, which is sudden and unforeseen, such as a natural disaster, fire, or other facility catastrophe, which necessitates the removal of clients from the facility to protect their health and safety. The term does not apply to emergency placements of clients outside of a facility due to behavior problems. For illustration purposes, we have provided a few examples below, which fall within the category of "emergency":

- A hurricane, snowstorm, tornado or other natural occurrence in which allowing clients to remain in the facility may jeopardize their health or safety;
- A facility fire, poor or non-functioning heating or cooling system (in cold or hot weather, respectively), poor or non-functioning septic system, or other situation in which allowing clients to remain in the facility may jeopardize their health or safety; and
- Any other unforeseen occurrence not noted above in which allowing clients to remain in the facility may jeopardize their health or safety.

Licensed Facility to Licensed Facility

If clients are moved from one licensed facility to another licensed facility and the capacity for that facility *will not be exceeded*, it is not necessary to notify DFS.

Emergencies Requiring Relocation of Clients



Location: 701 Barbour Drive • Dorothea Dix Hospital Campus • Raleigh, N.C. 27603
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Licensed Facility to: Unlicensed Facility or to Licensed Facility Exceeding Capacity

When a facility must move clients from a licensed facility to an unlicensed facility, due to an emergency situation as described above, it is recommended the facility, its director, owner or designee do the following:

1. First, ensure the safety and health of the clients by evacuating them to a safe and secure facility, where the clients' health needs will be met. There must be sufficient staff, food, medicine, medical equipment and supplies to ensure the safety and health needs of the clients.
2. *As soon as possible* after evacuation, notify DFS Mental Health Licensure and Certification Section (919) 855-3795 or DFS Construction Section (919) 855-3893 via phone and explain the situation and the reason for relocating the clients.
3. Submit in writing by facsimile (919) 715-8077 or mail the following information to the DFS MH Licensure & Certification Section:
 - Explanation and rationale for evacuating the facility and moving the clients to a new location.
 - The name and address of the site where the clients were relocated.
 - How the facility can be contacted.
 - How the facility implemented their emergency plan in accordance with 10 NCAC 27G .0207 – Emergency Plans and Supplies.
 - A copy of the facility's emergency plan: The facility's emergency plan should include the identification of potential evacuation sites to which clients might be moved in the event of an emergency, with assurance that the evacuation site will be able to accommodate the health and safety needs of the clients.
 - When the provider anticipates moving the clients back to the facility or in the case where the facility cannot be used (i.e. destroyed or otherwise unavailable for use), what provisions the provider is making to place the clients in a suitable setting.
 - Names and phone numbers of all client case managers including the date the case managers were notified of the evacuation and relocation.
4. If the facility cannot be used in the immediate future, the provider must have a plan for relocating the clients to a permanent licensed setting. DFS will work with the provider to license a new facility as soon as possible.

Please contact this office if you have any questions regarding this memorandum.

Cc: Fran Pedrigi, DFS Construction Section
Lacey Barnes, DMA
Jim Jarrard, DMHDDSAS

